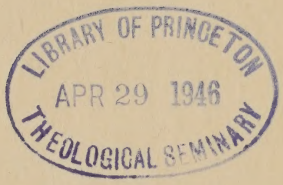
THY HEALTH SHALL SPRING FORTH

Russell Dicks

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

BV
4585
.D52
1945

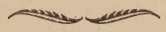


BV 4585 .D52 1945
Dicks, Russell Leslie, 1906
Thy health shall spring
forth

THY HEALTH SHALL SPRING FORTH

Books by

RUSSELL L. DICKS



Co-author:

THE ART OF MINISTERING TO THE SICK

Author:

MEDITATIONS FOR THE SICK

WHEN YOU CALL ON THE SICK

AND YE VISITED ME

YOUR SELF AND HEALTH

WHO IS MY PATIENT?

THE MINISTRY OF LISTENING (PAMPHLET)

PASTORAL WORK AND PERSONAL COUNSELING

THY HEALTH SHALL SPRING FORTH

RUSSELL L. DICKS

THY HEALTH SHALL SPRING FORTH

READINGS IN RELIGION AND HEALTH

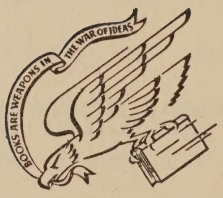
LIBRARY OF PRINCETON
APR 29 1946
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY · NEW YORK
1945

Copyright, 1945, by
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

All rights reserved—no part of this book may be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from the publisher, except by a reviewer who wishes to quote brief passages in connection with a review written for inclusion in magazine or newspaper.

First Printing



A WARTIME BOOK
THIS COMPLETE EDITION IS PRODUCED IN FULL COMPLIANCE WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S REGULATIONS FOR CONSERVING PAPER AND OTHER ESSENTIAL MATERIALS.

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
BY THE VAIL-BALLOU PRESS, INC., BINGHAMTON, N. Y.

To Halford Hallock, M.D.

Orthopedic Surgeon

who has the gift of healing in his hands

and

the spirit of healing in his heart

Contents

	PAGE
A PRAYER OF CONFIDENCE	1
THE NIGHT BEFORE AN OPERATION	2
FOR ONE IN PAIN	5
FOR ONE WHO FEELS GUILTY	8
FOR ONE WHO IS DISCOURAGED	12
FOR ONE WHO IS LONELY	15
FOR ONE WHO IS DISABLED	17
FOR ONE WHO HAS REGAINED HEALTH	19
A MEDITATION IN BEHALF OF NURSES	21
A MEDITATION IN BEHALF OF PHYSICIANS	23
THE SURGEON'S HANDS	24
IN BEHALF OF THOSE WHO ARE NOT SEEN	25
THE BLIND SCOTTISH PASTOR'S HYMN	28
THE HOSPITAL SPEAKS	29
SHEDDING WORRIES	30
A PRAYER FOR SLEEP	31
THE PRAYER OF LADY JANE GREY	32
A PRAYER TO BE FREE FROM WORRY	33
FOR THE PRESENCE OF GOD	33
GOD AND HEALTH	34
PRAYER FOR STILLNESS	50
PRAYER FOR HEALTH	53
PSALM TWENTY-THREE	54
COURAGE	55
BELIEF AND PRAYER	56
EVENING PRAYER	59
REST FOR THE NIGHT	60
NOTES	61

THY HEALTH
SHALL SPRING FORTH

A Prayer of Confidence

Lord of the Quiet Places, Keeper of the Silences,
Support us as we rest in Thee
And make us strong again.
The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want,
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures,
He leadeth me beside the still waters,
And I am made whole, again.
We lie down in green pastures of the spirit,
We drink deeply from the still waters of the soul,
And we are well, again.
Oh Lord, support us all the day long,
Until the evening shadows fall,
And our work is done;
And then give us that rest in which we are one with Thee,
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

The Night Before an Operation [1]

Many patients on the night before an operation have told me, "My confidence is in the surgeon and God." Their confidence is placed in that order, "the surgeon and God." It is easier to be conscious of the surgeon. We have seen him, and he has examined us. God is in the background or is taken for granted. But the surgeon himself is depending upon God for the ultimate cure of his patient through the work of what some call nature. Always he would say he assists God; never would he say God assists him.

In facing an operation most of us dread two things: we dread going to sleep under an anesthetic and we dread the discomfort following the operation. Occasionally someone is afraid he will talk while waking up from the anesthesia; that is a needless fear. Patients practically never talk in this condition unless they want to. At the worst one may swear, but even that not very convincingly, and under the circumstances no one takes it seriously.

Most of us can stand the after-operation discomfort as we stand any hard physical test. During severe pain we may say we wish we were elsewhere, but again no one takes us seriously.

To those who have had an operation before, the dread of going to sleep under an anesthetic is very real. This task, like most tasks we face, is hard largely because we make it hard. We think we must do something to help fall asleep, but actually the less we do the better it is for us. Most of the

discomfort there is in going to sleep under an anesthetic we bring on ourselves. The anesthetist (the doctor or nurse who gives the anesthetic) and her assistants know their job and you, as a patient, do not have any. You do not even have to shift your position except as you are told. If you are not relaxed but insist on allowing your curiosity to run rampant, as I did once, you have no one to thank for discomfort but yourself. You will do well to think of something you care about tremendously and everything else will take care of itself. It is as easy as that. Too easy, you may perhaps think.

If you are a religious person you may want to see your minister, priest or rabbi, that he may know what you are facing and may strengthen you spiritually. If you are not a regular attendant at any given church you may make use of the fact that the hospital has names of clergymen who are customarily called to see patients. Just speak to your nurse about it. Many patients may not want to go to that trouble. Following is a prayer I have used with patients frequently before operation. Think of each sentence quietly and at some length before moving on to the next. Let the meaning of each phrase sink deep into your mind.

THINK: Whatever happens I will be all right. God is near me at this time, now.

A Prayer before an Operation

Our Father, grant us Thy peace,
Thou who dost wait upon us when we are restless,
And who dost grant us courage when we are fearful;
Grant us quietness,

Grant us confidence,
Knowing that at this hour and in the days that are to follow
We are in worthy and capable hands.
Guide him who is to operate and those who are to serve as nurses;
We give ourselves into Thy sustaining presence;

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills,
From whence cometh my help.
My help cometh from the Lord,
Maker of heaven and earth;
From the strength of the hills we gather strength,
And take unto ourselves their patience;
As the sheep depend upon the shepherd, so will I depend upon Thee,
Now and in the days that are to follow.

Oh God, our Father,
Thou who dost protect us when we are afraid,
Grant us courage and a quiet mind;
Thou art my refuge and my fortress,
In Thee do I trust,
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. AMEN.

For One in Pain

Pain is like fire. It works both for us and against us. Pain is a sign that our bodily processes are at war with an invader who would destroy us. It is a warning of the presence of disease. If we heed its warning and seek medical attention at once it may have worked in our behalf.

Pain may strike with breath-taking fury, like a forest fire driving everything before it. Or it may overtake us gradually, until with its persistence it destroys our physical strength and mental poise. It confuses our thoughts. Sometimes it loosens our tongue and we pray, or curse, or scream. We seldom scream in pain but we frequently pray or curse.

We beg: "Oh God, take away the pain, take away the pain, only for an hour, for a minute . . ." There may be slight respite, then it strikes again. We may weep. Some are embarrassed because they weep when in pain. They should not be. To weep gains us some relief.

When pain has gone on day after day we may reach the place where we are exhausted from struggling against it. We wonder why God has not taken it away. We have offered him attractive moral bargains, but they have not been accepted. The pain is still with us. In desperation we curse. We curse the pain; we curse ourselves; we curse the fire which rises within us. We may even curse God, or desire to curse God, but most of us do not.

We play a game with the pain. We threaten it. We laugh at it. We ignore it. We chide it. We bully it. We dare it

to hurt us. We turn our backs upon it. We forget it! *Can prayer help?*

Prayer by the sufferer in the midst of pain is often ineffectual because his suffering is so much a part of him. His prayer cannot rise above the pain; he cannot gain perspective to see, to reach, beyond the confusion of pain. He prays in circles, and always his pain is the center of his prayer. If prayer is to be effective God must be its center and the thought of God must possess him who prays. If someone comes into your room while you are in pain—someone with poise, but not with pride, someone who is quiet—and if his poise can penetrate your confusion, if his quietness can gain your attention, he may express your prayer. And you may gain quietness also. He must carry your thought beyond the present moment, to the future, up and out and beyond . . . to sunshine on a hill, to cool water, to the smell of green leaves, to the dull hum of wind in the trees, to the distant echo of a train whistle.

A Prayer to Accept Pain

Eternal God, whose days are without end, whose mercies
are without number,
We lift our minds to Thee in our stress:
Make us still before Thee,
Fasten our minds upon Thy quietness;
Give us strength, oh God, for the task which is ours;
Make fast our minds in Thee
And cause us to be strong in our endurance.
Thou art the water of life,
Whosoever drinketh of Thee shall not thirst.

As the tired sheep drinketh of the cool wate
And rests beside the stream,
So we drink of Thy peace
And rest in the coolness of Thy presence.

Oh God, Comfort of the comfortless,
Thou who hast drawn us to Thee
In the heat of our suffering,
Grant us rest,
Grant us strength to endure;
In the name of that great Shepherd,
Jesus Christ, our Lord. AMEN.

For One Who Feels Guilty

The sense of guilt in illness takes several forms. It may make us uneasy to such an extent that our normal bodily functions are impaired or handicapped. Illness, from whatever cause, may bring upon us a feeling of guilt which, until that time, we had pushed into the back of our minds. Continued suffering may make us believe that God has either deserted us or is punishing us for our sins.

The recovery of health and the attainment of peace in the face of death are often delayed and occasionally frustrated because we can make no progress in overcoming our sense of guilt. Instead of putting our mistakes to use and growing spiritually under their stimulus, we brood upon them. Our very brooding then becomes fuel for a fire that should be permitted to die.

In the sickroom we see persons who carry the world upon their shoulders. The weight of the world's burdens has put its mark upon their faces. They are tense. They question everything that is done for them, and they wonder how their homes or their jobs will carry on while they are away. They have little or no humor. They frequently have violent tempers. They blame others for their pains and for their loneliness, and they *are* often very lonely persons, for they are miserable indeed. By some they are graphically called "itches," for they are irritable to themselves and to everyone around them. They carry the world: God has been dethroned, for they, in their minds, have forgotten they really

did not create it. They are frequently sufferers from a sense of guilt.

The great things of our experience happen to us more or less regardless of what we do. How many of us had any choice in getting born into this world? How many of us selected the particular environment in which we lived our early lives, or even our later lives? How many of us selected the abilities we found ourselves to possess? How many of us consciously determined our falling in love, or the job we would do, or the disease we would have? The great things of our experience happen to us. We may contribute to the details of life, but little to the fundamentals. On the other hand, we do control periods of our lives; in these periods we may have done wrong. Therefore, our task when we feel guilty is largely to examine that feeling as to its meaning for us in relation to God and to our neighbors. Through a sense of guilt God may speak to us about our wrongdoing, but often our feeling of guilt is not God at all but some foolish thought we have picked up.

The essence of forgiveness is contrition for sin. The nature of the sin or its frequency is of little importance. A penitent in a confessional booth was surprised to hear the priest, in response to his confession of having murdered, ask, "How many?"

That thought is really quite immoral, isn't it? But before saying so, consider what is the essence of Jesus' teaching concerning sin. Jesus was severe in his judgment of the self-righteous, the proud, who in no way admitted their sin. These he condemned most rigorously. He told of a man who stood in the square and prayed, "I thank Thee, Lord, that I am not like other men." Another bent his head in shame and begged, "Have mercy upon me, a sinner." The latter was far more righteous, said Jesus. A woman was

dragged before him to be condemned for her recognized sin and he condemned those who accused her. He told her simply, "Go and sin no more." A thief in death begged merely to be remembered by one whom he thought to be righteous, but Jesus blessed him: "This day wilt thou be with me in paradise."

There are those who believe their suffering is punishment for sin. Some suffering is caused by sin, by breaking the laws of nature. Diseases caused by excessive eating or excessive drinking of alcohol *are* contracted through sin. It is interesting that the early church fathers listed gluttony as one of the cardinal sins. Suffering from these diseases and others is punishment, but not primarily punishment. For there are those who commit the same sins and do not seem to suffer. Suffering from diseases contracted through sin is the same as other suffering, a warning to halt, to stop whatever one is doing that is endangering health. Even in diseases contracted through sin we can place little significance on physical suffering as punishment, while in other diseases there need be no guilt whatsoever.

A Prayer for Forgiveness

Oh, most merciful Father,
Thou who art ever more willing to forgive than we are to ask,
Pardon us our transgressions.
In the lonely hours of forgetfulness
We have been unmindful of Thee
And of Thy commandments;
Oh God, forgive us, we pray.

In our indifference we have been unfaithful to those we
love,
And to him who did open our eyes to Thee,
Jesus Christ, our Lord.
As a child plays and is burned,
As a child stumbles and falls,
So we are hurt by our willfulness.
Make us whole;
Give us strong limbs for walking,
And strong wills in the places where we are weak.
Reward those we have hurt,
And make us strong to reward them ourselves.
We rejoice in the warmth of Thy affection
And in the peace of Thy forgiveness.

Almighty God, Father of mercy,
Thou who hast given us grace to seek Thee,
Grant us humility of mind
And peace of spirit,
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. AMEN.

For One Who Is Discouraged

To be discouraged is to have arrived at a place upon a journey where the way is not marked and where no one appears of whom we may inquire the direction. Discouragement finds the spirit low. It overtakes us when we least expect it. We come upon it suddenly—often when we have been concentrating upon one objective to the exclusion of others.

We laboriously climb a mountain thinking to gain an unobstructed view, and there before us is a higher mountain; just when we had expected our hopes to be fulfilled we sink into discouragement. We plan our lives, our budgets, our affections. We concentrate upon a given end only to find that end beyond our attainment, or upon reaching a desired objective we find we had not correctly estimated its worth. Discouragement overtakes us when we dictate the terms by which we live.

Discouragement seldom comes at the time of severe illness. In severe illness our attention is taken up with the experience. We are surrounded by both seen and unseen attention. We are conscious of the doctor's treatment, the nurse's care, the solicitude of family and friends. We are conscious of pain or fever, of bodily warnings. As severe illness passes, and both our bodies and our friends come to accept the conditions of convalescence, we are left alone. When recovery slows up, discouragement arrives to find the house of the mind unoccupied. Then we say, "What's

the use?"—which is like a "for sale" sign appearing over unused property.

We do not arrive at discouragement by reason; neither can we depart from it by reason. We cannot escape from it by activity. Our minds seem dull, dry, indifferent. We cannot sleep, for we are exhausted from resting. We cannot pray, for prayers demand concentration.

There is one signpost to which we would direct the discouraged: relax physically. That calls for little effort. Relax in mind and in body. Out of your weariness may come quietness. In quietness you are renewed, in quietness beauty is discovered, in quietness heaven and earth touch.

A Prayer for Hope

Oh God, Lord of quietness,
Thou who dost renew us when we are discouraged,
Thou who dost wait upon us when we are disheartened,
Make us to be still;
Days when we have no mind for hope,
Nights when we are restless with discontent.
Grant us quietness.
Oh God, we are impatient when we should rest,
We hurry when we should wait.
As Jesus claimed his followers from many modes of life,
Claim Thou our minds and our spirits,
That we, too, may put away our thoughts
As they put away their tools;
That we may listen to Thee
As they once listened,
Claim Thou our discontent.

Oh God, Lord of the courageous,
Make us to put aside our listlessness,
Make us to rise up and follow Thee,
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. AMEN.

For One Who Is Lonely

Loneliness overtakes us with slinking determination in illness. In health we may be resourceful, independent. In illness we are limited, our activity is curtailed, our imagination is stultified. As the acute stage of our illness passes we receive less medical attention and we need less nursing care. Our families, relieved that we are recovering, become busy with their affairs. Our friends come to see us less frequently for they too have accepted the conditions of our illness. Now as at no other time our character is tried.

Some persons blame others for their loneliness. Some blame God. Often they are irritable to those around them. Bitterness may be the residue of loneliness and boredom.

We must learn to use our humor, our imagination, our memory, in order to avoid loneliness. We must explore quietness; in being alone we are afforded an opportunity for its exploration which we often miss in health.

A Prayer for Companionship of the Spirit

Eternal Father, Companion of the lonely,
Be Thou our Companion.
Pass with us through the valley of loneliness
And stand with us beyond its desolation;

Stir us to find heaven in common things
And friendliness in the commonplace;
Make us to be friendly.
In the weary hours of the dark nights,
And the drudgery of slow-turning days,
We would remember Thee;
When others forget us in their busyness
Thou wilt not forget.
Build Thou within us a new companionship,
A companionship of the spirit;
As the sea is to the ship,
As the air is to the bird,
So art Thou unto us in our outreaching.

Eternal and merciful Father,
Who dost wait upon us when we are discomforted,
Forgive Thou our shortcomings,
For we know we are even more imperfect in Thy sight than we are in our own;
Make us strong to right the wrongs we have brought upon others,
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. AMEN.

For One Who Is Disabled

Illness may leave us physically disabled. After our illness itself has passed we may face the task of a readjustment of our emotions, our dispositions, our pride, our bodies, our routine, to physical limitation.

Economically such disability and the corresponding readjustment may be very difficult. Social agencies and our government have been progressively taking steps to protect and aid the physically disabled through rehabilitation work, pensions, compensation legislation, and social insurance. Occupational disease and injuries inflicted by the machine and war have made such efforts necessary.

A greater test of character may be the *emotional* adjustment to physical disability. How can we take up our lives again if our activity or our appearance has been radically changed? It is a problem of acceptance. Acceptance is not resignation. Resignation is lying down, giving up. Acceptance is going forward, reconstruction.

It is important to remember, in trying to accept a physical disability, that our acceptance does not have to be completed at one time, or in a day, or in a week. Give yourself several weeks, months, to reconstruct your feelings. As your body adjusts—and it has an amazing ability to adjust—so your temperament and your pride will renew themselves.

There is always the possibility that good may come out of disability, character may be strengthened, the mind may grow, patience may be gained, new friends may be made.

A Prayer for Patience to Accept Disability

Oh God of mercy, comfort us in our need;
We are bowed down in misfortune,
We cling to Thee in despair;
Thou who art with us when we are lonely,
Thou who dost forgive us when we are bitter,
Make us to have patience.
We bless Thee for Christ who did suffer upon the cross,
Yet who was lifted above his suffering.
Make us to know the meaning of the cross for ourselves;
Make us to know that beyond the cross there is the resurrection,
Beyond the suffering of humility and imprisonment there is the new-won freedom of fortitude, of patience, of triumph.
Make us to turn our suffering to Thy glory,
To praise Thee through our devotion.

Oh God, Father of our Lord Jesus,
Who dost move in mysterious ways,
Make us to know Thy will for us;
Give us eyes to see, and minds for understanding,
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

For One Who Has Regained Health

Bishop William Lawrence once said he feared many thousands of his parishioners must have been lost at sea. He explained that in the course of years thousands of persons had requested his prayers for safe journeys at sea. Only one or two had ever requested that he express gratitude for the safe return from such a journey. He therefore presumed that all the others were lost at sea.

Most of us are like that in illness. We pray for the recovery of health, for patience to endure pain, for courage to overcome our apprehension, and for the safety of our families. All these things we ask of God in the stress of illness, but with the recovery of health, and especially after we have paid our doctor and hospital bills, we seldom give God another thought, insofar as our illness is concerned.

Recently, when I passed a two-year-old playing in a yard, I was startled to have the little boy, whom I had never seen before, yell out, "Hello!" Then before I could say anything he added quickly, "I'm fine, thank you!" and went on playing. That was his unexpected way, I believe, of voicing his gratitude for health.

We are sometimes like that ourselves when we try to express gratitude. It may be a little surprising to others but it is a pleasant kind of surprise.

Prayer of Gratitude upon the Recovery of Health

Oh God, Thou who dost bear us up in health,
Accept our gratitude.
I was thirsty and they gave me water,
I was feverish and they bathed me,
Oh God, I thank Thee.
I was afraid and they comforted me,
I was discouraged and they heartened me,
I was lonely and they visited me,
Oh God, I thank Thee.
I was weary but now I am rested,
I was weak but now I am strong,
I was broken but now I am whole,
Oh God, I thank Thee.
For the health of body,
For the peace of mind,
For the strength of spirit,
Oh God, I thank Thee.
Eternal Father, Protector of the weak,
Thou who hast been our refuge,
Thou who hast borne us up in our discomfort,
We thank Thee for our recovery of health,
We thank Thee for all those who have helped us when we could not help ourselves;
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

A Meditation in Behalf of Nurses

When I was sick ye came unto me,
When I was restless ye comforted me.

I

Oh God, our blessed Father,
Thou who art able to receive our gratitude,
We thank Thee for nurses;
For those who work with us through the long night,
For those who are patient with us when we are restless.
We thank Thee for nurses who are courageous,
For nurses who seem tireless when their work is never done.
Thou hast called them from many places;
They have learned hard lessons
And have faced hard tasks.
Oh God, we thank Thee for their devotion.

II

When we were feverish cool water freshened us,
When we were in pain a quiet voice encouraged us,
When we were afraid a hand steadied us.
Pillows that were in disorder,
Sheets that were wrinkled under us,
These she made smooth.
Lights that hurt our eyes,
Noise that hurt our senses,
Thoughts that hurt our minds,
These she took from us.

Times when she scolded us,
Times when she laughed at us,
Times when she ignored us,
Always with affection for us.

III

Oh God, Father of mercy and compassion,
Grant her happiness beyond her task,
Claim her thoughts beyond the day's work,
That she may turn to her task with a renewed spirit.
Give her vision that she may see beyond those she serves
To know that in the long night she watches not alone.
In the name of that great Shepherd of the sheep,
Jesus Christ, our Lord. AMEN.

A Meditation in Behalf of Physicians

Oh God, Master of life,
We thank Thee for physicians;
Thou hast called them to high tasks,
We thank Thee for their devotion;
Thou hast disciplined them to hard tasks,
We thank Thee for their humility;
Thou hast guided their searches,
We thank Thee for their willingness to be taught.
Oh God, grant them strength,
That their struggles against pain may continue;
Grant them wisdom,
That disease may be driven from body and mind;
Grant them skill,
That the child's cry may be stilled in the night.
Oh God, Father of mankind,
Thou who hast brought light out of darkness,
And nobility out of the commonplace,
Reward Thou the physicians:
We pray for physicians everywhere.
Accept our prayers for them,
As Thou dost accept their labors,
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

The Surgeon's Hands

His face? I know not whether it be fair,
  Or lined and grayed to mark the slipping years.
His eyes? I do not glimpse the pity there,
  Or try to probe their depths for hopes or fears.
Only upon his wondrous hands I gaze,
  And search my memory through so fittingly
To voice their loveliness. In still amaze
  I bow before their quiet dignity.
They make the crooked straight and heal old sores;
  The blind to see, the war-torn clean and whole.
Throughout the suffering world they touch the doors
  That open wide to life. The bitter bowl
Of pain they sweeten till the weary rest,
As though the hand of Christ had served and blest.

—Ida Norton Munson

In Behalf of Those Who Are Not Seen

"A cup of cool water," a glass of cold water, for one who is sick is like a hand out of the darkness for one who is drowning. How came that water to our bedside? We think of those who planned the city's water supply, drawing their knowledge from the accumulated experience of engineers of the past, since before the Romans built aqueducts to supply the city of Rome with water. We think of the search for suitable water reservoirs, of the voting of bonds, of the purchase of land for dam sites. We think of villages moved, of farms given over to lakes, of slow construction, of men, mules, machines in the hot sun, building dams to supply water for cities. We think of rains, of melting snow among hills in mountains far distant from the reservoirs, of slow-filling reservoirs, of floods and overflowing spillways. We think of chemists who test the water: watchdogs who stand guard over the innocent, watchdogs of the city's health. We think of the construction of water mains and the fitting of water faucets. We think of ice and the machines which make ice—ice that cools water. There are those who give us a glass of cool water when we are sick, *but they are not seen.*

"*When I was hungered you fed me.*" We think of those who plan the food we eat, of those who prepare it, of those who transport it, and of those who grow it. Fruit from California, cattle from Texas, wheat from North Dakota, butter from Minnesota. Plants that mature slowly in the

sun; "and when the harvest is come the farmer puts forth his sickle," that those who are ill may have food and be well again.

There is a special feeling which comes to a patient after fresh sheets have been put on his bed, a feeling which is hard to describe. It is refreshing, but it is more than that. Fresh sheets should always be put on the sickbed in the morning. They usually are, perhaps that is why we say they should be. There is something symbolic in the feel of fresh sheets when you are sick, like a new day, or a new job, when the disappointments, the pain, of yesterday may be forgotten. Fresh sheets—or even one fresh sheet, for one is all that need be fresh—give us new courage, new energy, new contentment. We think of those who work in laundries, of those who reclaim, freshen, renew.

We think of others who work for our recovery, of those who manage institutions that care for the sick, of trustees, of superintendents, of those who give money to build hospitals and maintain them. Why do they give? Have they perhaps suffered? Have they seen others suffer? Have they loved a child, and lost it because it could not be cared for? There is much needless suffering. *We think of those not seen who help us to recover health.*

One day I watched a cat and her scrawny little kitten playing in the dirt of a backyard visible from the hospital window. By merely raising my eyes I could see automobiles and trucks hurrying across Queensborough Bridge over the East River in New York City. Around us were tall apartment buildings. There was a scraggly bush in that tiny yard trying desperately to maintain its bit of green. It had been weeks since I had been out of that small room, since I had walked along the sidewalk, or worked at anything except the thankless task of trying to be patient, thankless because

patience is the least that is expected of one who is convalescing. I wondered how much that cat and her kitten cared about the traffic that sped over East River, the commerce of a great city; about the buildings which hedged us in; or about us who were in pain, or lonely, or afraid, so near by. I wondered how that old cat and her scrawny kitten could seem so contented there in the dirt near a measly little bush, half green, half dried up for want of sun and space. They were not seen by many. I felt a strange kinship with *those who are not seen.*

The Blind Scottish Pastor's Hymn

O Love that wilt not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in Thee;
I give Thee back the life I owe,
That in Thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be.

O Joy that seekest me through pain,
I cannot close my heart to Thee;
I trace the rainbow through the rain,
And feel the promise is not vain
That morn shall tearless be.

—The Reverend George Matheson

The Hospital Speaks

I stand by the side of a river
That's salt with the tang of the sea,
There's never a port of any sort
But sends her sons to me.
To me, from the ships on the river
They come to be eased of their pain,
But when they at length regain their strength
They're off to the ships again.

I stand by the side of a current
That's deeper far than the sea,
And storm-beaten craft of every draught
Come in to be healed by me.
But some have more sin than fever,
And some have more grief than pain,
God help me make whole both body and soul
Before they go out again.

—Hyla S. Watters

Shedding Worries [2]

As a youngster I was so conscientious that I made myself miserable over minor tragedies of childhood. Early one fall, when we had had an exceptionally heavy snowstorm, my father took me for a drive. "Notice these elms," he said. "The branches are so badly broken that the trees may die. But look at the evergreens—undamaged by the snow.

"There are just two kinds of trees in the world: the stubborn and the wise. An elm holds its branches rigid, and trouble piles on until its limbs finally break, disfiguring the tree or killing it. But when an evergreen is loaded with more weight than it can hold, it simply relaxes, lowers its branches and lets the burden slip away. The next morning the evergreen is unharmed. Be a pine tree, daughter. Bear what you can, then let the rest of the load slide off. You'll be prettier and you'll live longer."

That analogy, remembered in the midst of later troubles, saved me from becoming one of the world's gloomiest neurotics.

—Fredda Dudley

A Prayer for Sleep [3]

Eternal and Everlasting God,
In the growing quietness of the evening and the deepening shadows of the night,
Grant us sleep and rest.
With the stilling of the day's doings, and the end of coming and going about us,
Make us to be sleepy with heavy eyes and tired limbs.
As Thy creatures are lying down in the wood,
As the bird is quiet in its nest
And the wild thing in its hole,
May we in our sleep reflect our confidence in Thee,
And our assurance of Thy constant peace.
In our sleep give us that deeper communion of our souls with Thee
Which restoreth unto health.

Oh God, Thou great Companion,
Do Thou watch over us in our sleep.
May our minds be purified,
And our bodies renewed;
But especially do Thou watch over those we love:
May Thy peace bear them up,
And Thy presence preserve them,
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

The Prayer of Lady Jane Grey [4]

O Merciful God, be Thou unto me a strong tower of defence, I humbly entreat Thee. Give me grace to await Thy leisure, and patiently to bear what Thou doest unto me; nothing doubting or mistrusting Thy goodness towards me; for Thou knowest what is good for me better than I do. Therefore do with me in all things what Thou wilt; only arm me, I beseech Thee, with Thine armour, that I may stand fast; above all things, taking to me the shield of faith; praying always that I may refer myself wholly to Thy will, abiding Thy pleasure, and comforting myself in those troubles which it shall please Thee to send me, seeing such troubles are profitable for me; and I am assuredly persuaded that all Thou doest cannot but be well; and unto Thee be all honour and glory. Amen.

—Lady Jane Grey (1537–1554)

This noble woman was the innocent victim of plots to seize the throne of England. She was the great-granddaughter of Henry VII and the wife of the Earl of Dudley. Proclaimed Queen in 1553, she was deposed a few months later and executed with her husband on Tower Hill the following year.

A Prayer to be Free from Worry [5]

Lord, Who hast pity for all our weakness; put from us worry and all misgiving, that having done our best while it was day, we may, when night cometh, commit ourselves, our tasks, and all we love into Thy keeping, so receiving, as from Thee, the gift of sleep; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

—Charles Lewis Slattery

For the Presence of God [6]

Lord, Be Thou within me, to strengthen me; without me, to keep me; above me, to protect me; beneath me, to uphold me; before me, to direct me; behind me, to keep me from straying; round about me, to defend me. Blessed be Thou, our Father, for ever and ever. Amen.

—Lancelot Andrewes (1555–1626)

God and Health

Dr. Walter Cannon, Harvard University Medical School's great physiologist, once said, "When you understand a great deal about the human body and its resources for health you wonder why anyone is ever sick." Some illness can be explained on the basis of accidents to the human body, some on the basis of heredity, some has unknown causes but much of it is inexplicable except on the basis of the wear and tear of the soul upon the body.

The human body is so constructed as to go on functioning almost indefinitely if given an adequate amount of exercise, rest, food, water, and oxygen. Hard work will not wear it out, but worry will, and that right quickly.

For many years the medical practitioner, before the advent of scientific medicine, treated the soul in illness and let the body take care of itself, and it did surprisingly well. The physician had little treatment for the body until within the last hundred years. With the coming of the scientific study of disease and the human body, the physician rejoiced. Now he could be free from that troublesome creature, the patient, with all his problems; now he could treat disease and the patient could be "hanged," except for paying the bill. That was still a personality problem. Some years have gone by and the trend in medical science now is toward studying the whole patient, his social situation, his hopes and his disappointments. Medical men, through persons like Dr. Cannon, Dr. Flanders Dunbar, and others, have studied

disease and the human body, and they ask the question, "Why is anyone ever sick?" Why?

It is not the religious philosopher, or the church, or the preacher, that is directing this trend in medical science. In fact we have had little to do with it. The medical profession has taken us by surprise as it moves into the realm of religion. The physician asks his patient as he examines him, "What is your work? How long have you been doing it? How do you like it? What would you like to be doing?" "Are you married? Do you have a family? Do you have a mother-in-law?" If the patient is the mother-in-law he may ask, "Is it fun being a mother-in-law? What about those grandchildren? How often does your son-in-law beat you?" "What are your ambitions? Have you attained the dreams you had ten years ago? Why did you marry the husband you have?" Strangely personal questions; questions which have little to do with a pain in the abdomen, or a rapidly racing heart; questions that have little to do with diabetes, arthritis, tuberculosis, a fractured hip, a cancer. Or do they?

The physician does not know why one person gets a cold and another does not, why one has diabetes, another arthritis, another heart disease, another cancer. He does know that if given the chance, ninety per cent or more of his patients will get well. And by "given a chance" he means, sleep and rest and proper food, and freedom from thoughts and people that destroy the body's assimilation of its rest and food.

The physician knows that he cannot simply say to you, "Forget your troubles and you will be all right." Troubles cannot be forgotten. What are troubles? Here illness and the problems of illness move definitely into the realm of religion. We live our lives trying to get what we want and avoid what we don't want. Troubles arise when we don't get what we want and when we don't avoid what we want

to avoid. Troubles arise, more serious troubles so far as health is concerned, when some of our wants are in conflict with other wants, when our desires are not unified. Some of our desires pull in one direction and some in another, and we, the soul of us, the heart of us, falls in between. It is the old story of two calves tied together, one pulling toward one pile of hay and the other pulling toward the other. They will starve to death unless they decide to go one way or the other.

* * * * * * * *

It is the task of religion to give meaning to life; to describe goals worth working for, worth achieving; to give vision and the far view: perspective. I achieved this when sick by saying to myself as I came up to a surgical operation, "Five years from now this experience will not seem so important." Thus I thought of myself five years hence, and I was quiet and courageous. When you do not have a far view the world, your world, goes to pieces and falls in upon you. As Edna St. Vincent Millay has said:

> And he whose soul is flat—the sky
> Will cave in on him by and by.

In time of illness that is what happens to us, "the sky caves in on us"; we have not been able to "split the sky in two so as to let the face of God shine through." Just as the doctor treats his patient and does all in his power to help him regain his health, so God, working through nature, strives to bring health. We know that God wills health for us because of the tremendous resources in nature that work toward health. These powers function often without our knowledge. Some call this nature at work; others call it God working through nature.

Dr. Richard C. Cabot has described the "wisdom of the body," the ability to resist and combat disease, as follows: *

"As a ship rights herself after a squall has keeled her over, so the body rights itself after the minor 'squalls,' chemical and physical, that strike it daily in health and after the tempests of disease.

1. *Reserve.* In the chief organs of the human body we recognize an extra supply of reserve that can be called upon in need, like the reserve of a bank. When a man suffers from tuberculosis of the lungs, a certain portion of the lung is destroyed, but he has a great deal more lung tissue than he needs. He can call upon his reserve and get along, as the great Doctor Trudeau did at Saranac for nearly forty years of hard work, though he had only a part of one lung still healthy.

Experiments have shown that one can remove more than two-fifths of the human liver and still the remaining three-fifths will carry on the work of the organ, so far as one can see, just as well as before.

When we see a surgeon cut and tie thirty or forty blood vessels in the course of an operation, we may wonder what is to become of the blood that should circulate through them. The answer is that we have many more than we need. We can sacrifice a great many and still get on perfectly well with what are left.

Each of us has about twenty-two feet of intestine. By reason of disease a portion of it may have to be removed. One can lose three or four feet and hardly miss it at all.

2. *Balance.* In the laboratories where physiological and bacteriological work is carried on we use an instrument called a thermostat, that is, an instrument which keeps the

* Chapter IX, *The Art of Ministering to the Sick*, Cabot and Dicks, The Macmillan Company. Used by permission.

temperature stable. In growing bacteria we have to arrange that the temperature around them shall not vary more than a few degrees. If it rises or falls more than that the bacteria that we are trying to study die. A thermostat is a difficult instrument to manage. It seldom works perfectly, and it never works nearly so well as that extraordinary instrument, the human body.

Most of us know that if our temperature is taken with a clinical thermometer it is approximately 98.6° Fahrenheit, varying only a few tenths of a degree during the twenty-four hours. But we often do not realize that when a person goes into a temperature of 40° below zero, or when, as used to be the case with the stokers in steamships, he has to live minutes or hours in temperatures of 130° to 150° Fahrenheit, still his body keeps its temperature the same. A piece of metal and most substances that can become heated or chilled will respond to the temperature around them. The human body has the extraordinary capacity to keep its balance in terms of heat. Unless that were the case death would occur whenever one went into a cold temperature or into a hot temperature. This balance may be lost under a very hot sun, and then 'sunstroke' occurs. The body's temperature runs up to 110° or 115°, which it cannot sustain for many minutes and still live.

By a number of ingenious devices the body ordinarily preserves its temperature at a point between 98° and 99° Fahrenheit. These devices are not familiar to everyone. For instance, if we are cold we often shiver, and we think of shivering as an inevitable misfortune. Actually by shivering we keep ourselves warmer than we should be if we did not shiver. Shivering is a muscular action, and the action of any muscle tends to create warmth.

There are many other ways by which our body preserves

its own temperature as it must if life is to go on. Our brains do practically nothing about this; it is beyond our conscious powers; it is part of the intelligent action of the body itself.

A second example of this intelligence is the *balance of moisture* in the body. The human body is about four-fifths water, and it must preserve nearly that proportion of water, or life cannot go on. We are giving out water and taking in water all the time, and yet the body by its own intelligent arrangements preserves almost exactly the same proportion of water in itself at all times.

Most of us preserve the balance of our weight with little effort. Some people tend to get too heavy and others to get too thin, but on the whole it is amazing how seldom this happens, in spite of the fact that we are putting bulky substances into our tissues all the time and losing pounds and pounds of weight in every violent exertion. A football player sometimes loses ten or twelve pounds in one game. Nevertheless we hold our weight, within a pound or two, year after year.

The most delicate of all these balances is our chemical balance. Most substances that enter or leave the body can be classified as either acid or alkaline. When a substance is in chemical balance between the two we call it neutral. The body has to be held close to this neutral point. If it varies as much as a few parts in a thousand we become unconscious. But every act that we do, every muscular motion, every strong feeling, every deep breath, would change the chemical reaction of the body toward acidity unless the body balanced it by a change in the opposite direction. Every meal that we take pushes the body's reaction toward the alkaline side. And yet, although acid is being taken into the body or made in the body in great quantities, in irregular quantities, and at irregular times from moment to moment,

the healthy body still preserves this delicate balance of acid and alkali.

Imagine a bank with its receiving and paying tellers; imagine that thousands and thousands of dollars are being poured into that bank in various amounts, large and small, and at various times of the day, without any rule or order. At the same time imagine that large and small amounts are being taken out of the bank by depositors. This is what is usually going on in fact. Now imagine what never happens, that the balance of money in that bank is preserved within a few dollars of the same amount at all times. Imagine that if the balance in the bank varied more than a few dollars the bank would break. Then you have a picture of what is actually going on at the present moment in your body and the bodies of all human beings. It seems too strange to be true, but it is true.

3. *Compensation.* We all know that if a person is unable to use one arm and as a result uses the other constantly, the arm which is used for two gains something like the strength of two. In the School for Crippled Children at Canton, Massachusetts, I saw a few years ago a little boy who as the result of infantile paralysis had lost altogether the power of his legs. He had been at home without treatment for a long time, and there he had learned to walk on his hands. When he wanted to walk he folded up his useless legs, pushed them out of the way over his head, stood upon his hands and walked on them. He could walk upstairs and downstairs. His arms were enormously developed. That is 'compensatory hypertrophy,' or enlargement of the muscles in response to need and use. It is familiar to most of us in muscles. It is not so familiar, perhaps, inside the body.

When heart disease takes the form of valvular inflammation and deforms the valve, the situation is like what would

happen if one of the doors of a room were stuck halfway open, so that it would neither open nor close fully. That is what happens to the heart valve when the germ of rheumatism attacks it. The individual could not live if it were not that, as the deformity gradually occurs in the valve, the heart gradually thickens and so strengthens its own muscle. A heart that is ordinarily the size of an individual's fist will become as big as two or three or even four fists, because it must. In no other way can it push the blood along hard enough to maintain the circulation when the openings into the heart and out of it are narrowed. The circulation must go on about as fast as it normally does. The compensatory growth of the heart muscle makes this possible.

With automobile accidents as common as they are today, there are a great many cases in which children are run over by a wheel in such a way that the kidney is broken or cut. The surgeon, when he operates on such a case, tries to repair the damage and in some cases he can. But in many cases he cannot do so and in order to stop the bleeding he has to remove the kidney altogether. How can he possibly dare to do such a thing as to remove a human kidney? Because experience has shown that as soon as one kidney is removed the other begins to grow, and in a very short time doubles its size so that it is as big as the two were before, and does the work exactly as well.

The work of the kidney seems to us one of the most wonderful things to be found anywhere on earth. In any pair of healthy human kidneys there are many miles of tubes, and within those tubes all sorts of processes are going on. When the solitary kidney gets twice as big, something very complicated is rebuilt or enlarged. All the details are rebuilt so as to leave the patient in the end not merely somewhere near as good, but exactly as good as he was before. The

architecture of a kidney is far more complicated and differentiated than the architecture of any ordinary building. In a house we build a cellar, kitchen, sleeping rooms, parlor, attic, and closets, all for different purposes. The kidney has as many different parts. It has its own chemical laboratory in which analytic and synthetic, dissolving and combining processes are done. Some of these chemical processes are new. On occasion they make substances which so far as we know have never been manufactured in that kidney before. They are made in response to a need for an antidote for a special poison.

We have more blood vessels, tubes which carry blood, than we need. One of the reasons that we get along so well when a number of vessels are cut or destroyed is that some of those that are left become enlarged. One of the common diseases of the liver is called 'cirrhosis' or the 'gin-drinker's liver.' That means that alcohol or some other substance taken in with the liquor circulates through the liver, hardens it and blocks it so that the blood which should go through it from the intestine cannot pass. Yet people sometimes live with this disease for many years and never find out that they have it, because detours, such as are provided when a street is blocked, are arranged by the wisdom of the body. The blood goes through a new set of blood vessels, partly newly formed and partly old ones enlarged. In this way there is sometimes such perfect compensation for the cirrhosis that the individual feels entirely well for years and finally dies of something else.

When one goes into a high altitude and lives above five thousand feet, the air which one breathes is rarified so that less oxygen is taken in at each breath. No one would be able to live at this altitude were it not that the red corpuscles, which carry the oxygen from the lungs to all parts of the

body, begin to grow in number as soon as the air becomes notably thinned, and soon increase to an extraordinary degree.

In every cubic millimeter of blood, a drop about the size of a large pinhead, we have five millions of red corpuscles. After a person has spent a few weeks in a high altitude he has six million, and if he goes to a higher altitude he has seven million. I have seen a person who had gone to so high an altitude and lived there so long that he had nine million red corpuscles to a cubic millimeter of blood. This was a compensatory change. He used the diminished supply of oxygen which came into his lungs in that high altitude so effectively and so rapidly that he was perfectly well. When he came down to a low altitude the extra red corpuscles were destroyed and put out of the body and he throve on five million, as he did before.

4. *Defense.* Rest is defense. If you sprain your wrist it becomes swollen and stiff. Nature says, 'You had better rest that wrist.' Even before the doctor comes, 'nature' splints the wrist by making it so sore that you hesitate to move it, and so stiff that you cannot easily move it. The doctor reinforces nature's splint with an artificial one.

If a person is strained emotionally or physically beyond a certain point by exertion or terror, nature says, 'Take a rest,' and he faints. Soreness and stiffness in a wrist, fainting after a hard race or in an accident, seem like something hostile to our welfare, something to be fought against. But the truth is that they are evidence of a power working on our side to do us service.

What we do in the treatment of an injured joint is to imitate nature and to supplement nature. By means of a stomach tube we imitate one of the body's natural defenses: vomiting. When poison is swallowed the stomach usually

rejects it before the physician with his stomach tube can get there to help in the emptying. The body rejects poisons through several channels; it throws out alcohol through the lungs so that we smell it in the drinker's breath. It also puts out poisons by the bowels and sometimes by the blood. Nosebleeds in persons with kidney trouble help to get poisons out of the body. Any competent physician knows that when a person with kidney trouble has nosebleed it is one of the best things that can happen. By bleeding him nature is unpoisoning him and lowering his blood pressure at the same time.

The body also defends itself against poisons by neutralizing them. The most familiar example of this is in the germ diseases, from which we suffer because bacteria invade our bodies and form poisons or 'toxins.' These must be neutralized or we die. The body itself forms antitoxins which are specific, unique substances, each different from each and hostile only to the poison of the disease for which it is formed.

Before we had the remedy which is now called antitoxin for diphtheria the mortality rate was about forty per cent, which meant that in about sixty per cent of the cases nature formed enough antitoxin in the child to cure it, but that in forty per cent the body did not make enough antitoxin. To supplement it we make outside the body an artificial 'diphtheria antitoxin,' imitating nature as nearly as we can. We build up in the blood of another animal, ordinarily a horse, an antitoxin like that which the human body itself builds up against diphtheria, but which it does not always build in sufficient quantity. We put into the veins of a healthy horse a small amount of diphtheria poison. The horse eats a little less hay for a day or two and then he is all right. Then we put in double that dose. Again he may be a little under the

weather but in a few days he is all right. So we go on step by step to build up in this animal the neutralizing substance opposite to this particular poison. His blood will not neutralize the toxin of any other disease except diphtheria. The new-formed antitoxin is a specific and unique substance.

Then we draw off from the jugular vein of the horse a certain amount of his blood, not enough seriously to incapacitate him but enough to be of use to many human beings. We drain off the corpuscles, put in a preservative, and the result is a yellow fluid which we call diphtheria antitoxin. This is then put into the child's body to aid the antitoxin which the body has already made there after the disease began. In this way the mortality of diphtheria has been reduced to six or seven per cent, and with the protective injections which are now being carried out in every intelligent community we are reducing diphtheria to zero. Many of us now alive may see diphtheria wiped out altogether, as smallpox is in communities intelligent enough to enforce vaccination laws.

We have described how the body neutralizes poisons of the kind produced in infectious diseases by bacteria. But the body neutralizes poisons in many other ways. A suicidal unfortunate swallows a strong acid. Then the body manufactures enormous quantities of alkali, far more than it was making before for any other purpose, and so neutralizes the poisonous acid. When one recovers from certain kinds of poisoning it is nine-tenths by reason of what the body does by way of neutralization and one-tenth what the doctor does to imitate and to supplement nature.

Consider now another of the body's self-defenses. If you wound your finger with a splinter of wood or with anything else that is apt to be dirty, there often occurs the process that we call *festering*. What we call 'pus' appears round the

splinter. We do not stop to think what this means, yet this is one of the most dramatic and one of the most wonderful things that happens in the human body. What is this stuff called 'matter' or 'pus'? It is the dead bodies of leucocytes, that is, of white corpuscles from the blood, which have come to the spot, have fought against the bacteria, have died in the fight and have piled up their bodies to make a wall of defense between the attacking bacteria on the one side and the free circulation on the other. If this wall were broken down and the bacteria got into the blood we should have blood poisoning and probably die. Every dirty splinter that we get into our hands might be fatal were it not for the fight put up for us by these little creatures called leucocytes.

The human body is built up of cells, just as houses are built up of bricks. Among these cells most are as fixed as the bricks in a wall, but there is one race of free, lively and intelligent cells, the leucocytes in the blood, which in response to a need for them, travel to any part of the human body and there fight, destroy many bacteria, and are themselves often killed in the fight. They conquer in the vast majority of cases because they build up the protecting wall just described. Almost every case of appendicitis would be fatal if this wall of leucocytes were not built by 'nature' around the diseased appendix. What doctors call 'walling off' the disease happens before the surgeon gets there, in the majority of cases. The bodies of the leucocytes shut in the inflammation until the surgeon gets there to remove it.

In Boston an elderly man, sixty-four years of age, with a ruddy, fresh complexion and white hair, stepped off the corner of a street without looking where he was going, was struck by an automobile and fatally injured. He was brought to the Massachusetts General Hospital and died within an

hour. His wife came soon after, and when she was asked about her husband, she declared that he had never been sick in his life. He was a bartender, a local politician, a most active person both in mind and body. Yet this is what was found upon examination: (1) Healed tuberculosis of both lungs. (2) Cirrhosis of the liver, with all the blood going around by a new set of roads above and below his liver. (3) Chronic kidney trouble, but with enough reserve kidney tissue to carry on the kidneys' function perfectly despite the destruction of a large portion of one and a small portion of the other kidney. (4) Hardening of the arteries and compensatory enlargement of his heart. No doubt he had had high blood pressure for a long time. All this he never knew. In other words, here was a perfectly well man with four fatal diseases inside of him, none of which had done him any harm!

When part of a vessel is injured in a storm, they rig up something to take the place of it. A 'jury mast' is rigged up for a broken mast, or a 'jury rudder' for a broken rudder. This man's body was full of 'jury' arrangements. Four vital organs had these compensatory defenses, *but he was a going concern.* He could do what he wanted to do and felt no inconvenience, because of the intelligence of the human body exerted in his defense.

The facts are before us. Every doctor knows them. There is nothing new or doubtful about them. The conclusions are for each to draw for himself. The conclusion which may be drawn is a greater confidence in life. However we may fall short, there a gigantic healing power fights on our side. Matthew Arnold defined God as the power not ourselves that makes for righteousness. There is a great power in ourselves that makes for health, and that works day and night,

when we are asleep and when we are awake, when we are good and when we are bad. Its beneficence falls like rain upon the just and upon the unjust.

A great healing power fights on our side and wins most of our battles for us. When we look around at 'nature' in the mountains, the forests, the plains or the sea, we see no evidence of powers that care about us. Nature seems indifferent to our welfare. But if we look at that portion of nature which concerns us most, our own bodies, we see no indifference, no neutrality, but an extraordinary bias in our favor. On the basis of these healing powers our intelligence and our will get their opportunity.

The facts described here, are some of the great reasons for believing in the goodness of God. He is the plan of this world. Our bodies have been built up in evolution as part of that plan. They show us that plan, never slumbering, watching over us when we sleep, exerting in our bodies an intelligence which we try to imitate and to reinforce by our medical and our surgical work. God does not do all our work for us. He leaves undone enough to challenge our intensest energy. He helps those who help themselves and some who do not, but He is never neutral in our life struggle. He offers us a model of healing work and does most of the healing Himself.

His plan also includes enemies to our welfare, bacteria, wild beasts, earthquakes, famine, torrid heat and freezing cold. He intends that we shall have plenty of enemies to fight. But in our fight against disease we have a prodigiously ingenious and powerful force always at work on our side."

* * * * * * * *

Basically the problem of health and of regaining health when we are sick is the problem of establishing and main-

taining a proper relationship with God and the world in which we live. It matters not whether we have fallen prey to fear or apprehension or dread, loneliness or resentment or remorse. We become ill oftentimes because we feel we have failed and want to die; we become ill because of loneliness and feel that life is not worth living; we become ill because we are afraid to live and afraid to die—that truly is a sad state. Regardless of its cause, to be ill is to be a stranger in a strange land, to pass through lonely places of the spirit, to be hot, thirsty, naked and in prison; to be in a prison that is bounded by four walls, by pain, by fever, by helplessness, by strange people and strange dreams, by long days and endless nights. In our terror we feel God and man have deserted us and that only the depths of hell itself are left to us. Then we *must* as Miss Millay has said, "split the sky in two, and let the face of God shine through."

. . . . I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you. For everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask for a fish will he give him a serpent? Or if he ask an egg will he give him a scorpion? If ye being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?—Luke 11:9–13

Prayer for Stillness

Most Blessed Lord, in Whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning, Whose stillness is around and within us; to repose in the recollections of Whose Presence is sweetest joy and refreshment, enfold us in this ineffable peace which is Thine own unchanging Will. Still our irritation, soothe our restlessness; say to our hearts, "Peace, be still." Brood over us, within us, Spirit of Perfect Peace, so that outwardly we may reflect the inner stillness of our souls and that we may bear change, distraction, sudden assaults of temptation and disappointments and still be found lying in Thy Heart, O Jesu, enfolded in Thy loving care. Let us be undisturbed, and in true quietness fulfill the calling which is set before us. Be it even so, dear Lord. Amen.

—Source Unverified

Like summer seas that lave with silent tides a lonely shore, like whispering winds that stir the tops of forest trees, like a still small voice that calls us in the watches of the night, like a child's hand that feels about a fast-closed door; gentle, unnoticed, and oft in vain; so is Thy coming unto us, O God.

Like ships storm-driven into port, like starving souls that seek the bread they once despised, like wanderers begging refuge from the whelming night, like prodigals that seek the father's home when all is spent; yet welcomed at the open door, arms outstretched and kisses for our shame; so is our coming unto Thee, O God.

Like flowers uplifted to the sun, like trees that bend before the storm, like sleeping seas that mirror cloudless skies, like a harp to the hand, like an echo to a cry, like a song to the heart; for all our stubbornness, our failure and our sin; so would we have been to Thee, O God. AMEN.

—W. E. ORCHARD in *The Temple*

The child that does not cry perishes for food upon its mother's back.—African Proverb.

* * * *

Our great task in the recovery of health is to quiet our desires and our spirits so that the forces of God may work in us to bring about health and confidence.

* * * *

Let me be quiet now, and kneel,
  Who never knelt before,
Here where the leaves paint patterns light
  On a leaf-strewn forest floor;
For I who saw no God at all
  In sea or earth or air,
Baptized by Beauty, now look up
  To see God everywhere.

—Ellen Frances Gilbert

Prayer for Health [7]

O God, our Father,
In quietness and confidence we turn to Thee,
Thanking Thee for the joys of life and living,
Eternal Father, we pray for the return of health;
We rest in Thee: as a ship rests upon the sea,
As a house rests upon its strong foundation,
Knowing that Thou dost work to give us health of body, and courage of soul,
Through the doctor's knowledge, through the nurse's skill,
Through the minister's quietness and prayer,
Through the affection of loved ones,
Through food, and rest, and fresh air of hope;
We trust Thee, our Father, and we thank Thee for the health-giving forces within us,
And in that trust we are strengthened, in that confidence we are made whole.
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Courage

Courage is not just
To bare one's bosom to the saber-thrust,
    Alone in daring.
Courage is to grieve,
To have the hurt, and make the world believe
You are not caring.

Courage does not lie
Alone in dying for a cause. To die
    Is only giving.
Courage is to feel
The daily daggers of relentless steel
    And keep on living.

—Author Unknown

Belief and Prayer [8]

There are those who say they have no faith in God, or no trust in the universe, or no hope in any power outside themselves to conserve that which they care about. Recall that instance in the Gospels when Jesus, returning from the Mount of Transfiguration, found his disciples trying unsuccessfully to heal a sick child. Jesus said to the child's father, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." The father cried out, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." Whereupon Jesus healed the child. (Mark 9:17–27)

I believe some things, I would believe more. Unless there is a desire to believe there can be no increase of belief.

If we simply brood about prayer without ever attempting to pray we will never gain in belief. We are like a child who watches others walk, then asks questions about walking, even imagines himself walking, eventually reads about walking, but never tries it himself. But, we say, that would never happen. A child learns to walk before he ever reads about it, before he can ask questions about anything. Yes, and so we have faith before we ever ask questions. We pray before we ever challenge prayer. Faith begets faith, just as fear begets fear. It is ridiculous to say, "Have faith," as many do, and and expect us to have it. We *already* have it.

We have faith in many things and in many people. We believe that the sun will rise tomorrow morning, that even if it is a cloudy day the sun will be there behind the clouds.

We believe that spring will come in its season and that plants will grow. We believe that our bodies draw nourishment from the air, that our food is transformed into sustenance for them. We believe in our friends; we trust those who care for us when we are sick. If you say these things are not of God, there are those who would disagree with you. The Plan whereby you sleep and awake refreshed, whereby disease is thrown off, or removed by the physician, whereby you breathe, and rest, and work: *this is God at work.*

A theological student, who had demonstrated his ability as a football player, spoke to a group of men in prison. His topic was "My Belief in Prayer." He spoke simply of his own use of prayer and how it brought him into touch with something beyond himself. He spoke of his feeling after he had expressed gratitude to God for the privilege of life and for what it meant to him day after day, for sleep at night, for warmth, for friends, for courage, for his mind and his ability to think, for books and magazines and what they contain. These are things for which a man in prison might be thankful.

Two or three days later one of the prisoners said to a visitor, "By God, I think there's something in what that fellow said. I'm going to try it myself." I believe; help thou mine unbelief.

Oh God, in gratitude we quiet our minds,
Seeking to express our thanks.
Why life was given us we know not;
Why we may think, or hope, or plan,
We know not;
How we can trust, or wait, or feel,
We know not:

These things we do,
Oh God, we thank Thee for them.
And as we thank Thee we reach out . . .
Make us to know Thy plan for us
And give us strength to follow it,
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. AMEN.

Evening Prayer [9]

O Thou Who art from everlasting to everlasting, I would turn my thoughts to Thee as the hours of darkness and of sleep begin. O Sun of my soul, I rejoice to know that all night I shall be under the unsleeping eyes of One who dwells in eternal light.

To Thy care, O Father, I would now commend my body and soul. All day Thou hast watched over me and Thy companionship has filled my heart with peace. Let me not go through any part of this night unaccompanied by Thee.

Give me sound and refreshing sleep:

Give me safety from all perils:

Give me in my sleep freedom from restless dreams:

Give me control of my thoughts, if I should lie awake:

Give me wisdom to remember that the night was made for sleeping.

Give me grace, if as I lie abed I think at all, to think upon Thee. Amen.

—John Baillie

Rest for the Night

O Lord, support us all the day long of this troublous life, until the shadows lengthen, and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed, and the fever of life is over, and our work is done; then, O Lord, in Thy mercy, grant us safe lodging, a holy rest, and peace at the last; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—Source Unknown

Save me, O Lord, while waking, and guard me while sleeping, that when I wake I may watch with Christ and when I sleep I may rest in peace.

—Roman Breviary (alt.)

Notes

1. Meditations for the Sick, Russell L. Dicks, pp. 10–61, 1937.
2. Reader's Digest, September, 1942.
3. Meditations for the Sick, p. 8.
4. Quoted in The Golden Book of Prayer, Donald B. Aldrich, p. 25, 1941. Dodd, Mead & Co., New York.
5. On Wings of Healing, John W. Doberstein, p. 28, 1942. The Muhlenberg Press, Philadelphia.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 61.
7. Who Is My Patient? Russell L. Dicks, p. 127, 1941. The Macmillan Company, New York.
8. Meditations for the Sick, p. 78.
9. A Diary of Private Prayer, John Baillie, 1936. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York.

Date Due

Je 3 '46
Jl 17 '46
D 27 '46
F 4 47
AUG 2 9 '59

Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library
1 1012 01005 2209